

# Freudian Slips: Freud Speaks Cocaine

From 'Über Coca,' *Centralblatt für die ges. Therapie*, 2, pp. 289–314, 1884

## V. The Effect of Coca on the Healthy Human Body

I have carried out experiments and studied, in myself and others, the effect of coca on the healthy human body; my findings agree fundamentally with Mantegazza's description of the effect of coca leaves.

The first time I took 0.05cg. of *cocainum muriaticum* in a 1% water solution was when I was feeling slightly out of sorts from fatigue. This solution is rather viscous, somewhat opalescent, and has a strange aromatic smell. At first it has a bitter taste, which yields afterwards to a series of very pleasant aromatic flavors. Dry cocaine salt has the same smell and taste, but to a more concentrated degree.

A few minutes after taking cocaine, one experiences a sudden exhilaration and feeling of lightness. One feels a certain furriness on the lips and palate, followed by a feeling of warmth in the same areas; if one now drinks cold water, it feels warm on the lips and cold in the throat. On other occasions the predominant feeling is a rather pleasant coolness in the mouth and throat.

During this first trial I experienced a short period of toxic effects, which did not recur in subsequent experiments. Breathing became slower and deeper and I felt tired and sleepy; I yawned frequently and felt somewhat dull. After a few minutes the actual cocaine euphoria began, introduced by repeated cooling eructation. Immediately after taking the cocaine I noticed a slight slackening of the pulse and later a moderate increase.

I have observed the same physical signs of the effect of cocaine in others, mostly people of my own age. The most constant symptom proved to be the repeated cooling eructation. This is often accompanied by a rumbling which must originate from high up in the intestine; two of the people I observed, who said they were able to recognize movements of their stomachs, declared emphatically that they had repeatedly detected such movements. Often, at the outset of the cocaine effect, the subjects alleged that they experienced an intense feeling of heat in the head. I noticed this in myself as well in the course of some later experiments, but on other occasions it was absent. In only two cases did coca give rise to dizziness. On the whole the toxic effects of coca are of short duration, and much less intense than those produced by effective doses of quinine or salicylate of soda; they seem to become even weaker after repeated use of cocaine.

...

There are said to be people who cannot tolerate coca at all; on the other hand, I have found not a few who remained unaffected by 5cg, which for me and others is an effective dose.

The psychic effect of *cocainum muriaticum* in doses of 0.05–0.10g consists of exhilaration and lasting euphoria, which does not differ in any way from the normal euphoria of a healthy person. The feeling of excitement which accompanies stimulus by alcohol is completely lacking; the characteristic urge for immediate activity which alcohol produces is also absent. One senses an increase of self-control and feels more vigorous and more capable of work; on the other hand, if one works, one misses that heightening of the mental powers which alcohol, tea, or coffee induce. One is simply normal, and soon finds it difficult to believe that one is under the influence of any drug at all.

...

I have tested this effect of coca, which wards off hunger, sleep, and fatigue and steels one to intellectual effort, some dozen times on myself; I had no opportunity to engage in physical work.

...

The effect of a moderate dose of coca fades away so gradually that, in normal circumstances, it is difficult to define its duration. If one works intensively while under the influence of coca, after from three to five hours there is a decline in the feeling of well-being, and a further dose of coca is necessary in order to ward off fatigue. The effect of coca seems to last longer if no heavy muscular work is undertaken. Opinion is unanimous that the euphoria induced by coca is not followed by any feeling of lassitude or other state of depression. I should be inclined to think that after moderate doses (0.05–0.10g) a part at least of the coca effect lasts for over twenty-four hours. In my own case, at any rate, I have noticed that even on the day after taking coca my condition compares favorably with the norm. I should be inclined to explain the possibility of a lasting gain in strength, such as has often been claimed for coca by the totality of such effects.

It seems probable, in the light of reports which I shall refer to later, that coca, if used protractedly but in moderation, is not detrimental to the body. Von Anrep treated animals for thirty days with moderate doses of cocaine and detected no detrimental effects on their bodily functions. It seems to me noteworthy – and I discovered this in myself and in other observers who were capable of judging such things – that a first dose or even repeated doses of coca produce no compulsive desire to use the stimulant further; on the contrary, one feels a certain unmotivated aversion to the substance.

...

Coca is a far more potent and far less harmful stimulant than alcohol, and its widespread utilization is hindered at present only by its high cost.

...

Like Mantegazza and Frankl, I have experienced personally how the painful symptoms attendant upon large meals – viz, a feeling of pressure and fullness in the stomach, discomfort and a disinclination to work – disappear with eructation following small doses of cocaine (0.025–0.05). Time and again I have brought such relief to my colleagues; and twice I observed how the nausea resulting from gastronomic excesses responded in a short time to the effects of cocaine, and gave way to a normal desire to eat and a feeling of bodily well-being. I have also learned to spare myself stomach troubles by adding a small amount of cocaine to salicylate of soda.

...

Accordingly, I should say that the use of coca is definitely indicated in cases of atonic digestive weakness and the so-called nervous stomach disorders; in such cases it is possible to achieve not merely a relief of the symptoms but a lasting improvement.

c) *Coca in cachexia*. Long-term use of coca is further strongly recommended and allegedly has been tried with success – in all diseases which involve degeneration of the tissues, such as severe anemia, phthisis, long-lasting febrile diseases, etc.; and also during recovery from such diseases.

...

I once had occasion to observe the case of a man who was subjected to the type of cure involving the sudden withdrawal of morphine, assisted by the use of coca; the same patient had suffered severe symptoms as a result of abstinence in the course of a previous cure. This time his condition was tolerable; in particular, there was no sign of depression or nausea as long as the effects of coca lasted; chills and diarrhea were now the only permanent symptoms of his abstinence. The patient was not bedridden, and could function normally. During the first days of the cure he consumed 3dg of *cocainum muriaticum* daily, and after ten days he was able to dispense with the coca treatment altogether.

The treatment of morphine addiction with coca does not, therefore, result merely in the exchange of one kind of addiction for another – it does not turn the morphine addict into a *coquero*; the use of coca is only temporary. Moreover, I do not think that it is the general toughening effect of coca which enables the system weakened by morphine to withstand, at the cost of only insignificant symptoms, the withdrawal of morphine. I am rather inclined to assume that coca has a directly antagonistic effect on morphine...

...

f) *Coca as an aphrodisiac*. The natives of South America, who represented their goddess of love with coca leaves in her hand, did not doubt the stimulative effect of coca on the genitalia. Mantegazza confirms that the coqueros sustain a high degree of potency right into old age; he even reports cases of the restoration of potency and the disappearance of functional weaknesses following the use of coca, although he does not believe that coca would produce such an effect in all individuals. Marvaud emphatically supports the view that coca has a stimulative effect; other writers strongly recommend coca as a remedy for occasional functional weaknesses and

temporary exhaustion; and Bentley reports on a case of this type in which coca was responsible for the cure.

Among the persons to whom I have given coca, three reported violent sexual excitement which they unhesitatingly attributed to the coca. A young writer, who was enabled by treatment with coca to resume his work after a longish illness, gave up using the drug because of the undesirable secondary effects which it had on him.

### **From *Nachtrage Über Coca*, Verlag Von Moritz Perles, Wien, 1885**

#### **3. The Internal Application of Cocaine**

As, at present, many authorities seem to harbor unjustified fears with regard to the internal use of cocaine, it is not out of place to stress that even subcutaneous injections – such as I have used with success in cases of long standing sciatica – are quite harmless. For humans the toxic dose is very high, and there seems to be no lethal dose.

...

However, the present still artificially high price of the drug is an obstacle to all further experiments.

### **From ‘Ueber die Allgemeinwirkung des Cocaïnes,’ in *Medicinisch-chirurgisches Centralblatt*, 32 pp. 374–375. Lecture, August 1885**

In my paper "On Coca" (*Heitler's Centralblatt für die gesammte Therapie*, July 1884; printed separately by Merits Perles, 1885), I have given several examples of the disappearance of legitimate fatigue and hunger, etc., which I observed largely among colleagues who had taken cocaine at my request. Since that time, I have made many similar observations, among them that of a writer who for weeks before had been incapable of any literary production and who was able to work for 14 hours without interruption after taking 0.1g of cocaine hydrochloride.

...

On the whole, it must be said that the value of cocaine in psychiatric practice remains to be demonstrated, and it will probably be worthwhile to make a thorough trial as soon as the currently exorbitant price of the drug becomes more reasonable.

...

I myself have had occasion to observe a case of rapid withdrawal from morphine under cocaine treatment here, and I saw that a person who had presented the most severe manifestations of

collapse at the time of an earlier withdrawal now remained able, with the aid of cocaine, to work and to stay out of bed, and was reminded of his abstinence only by his shivering, diarrhea, and occasionally recurring craving for morphine. He took about 0.40g of cocaine per day, and by the end of 20 days the morphine abstinence was overcome. No cocaine habituation set in; on the contrary, an increasing antipathy to the use of cocaine was unmistakably evident. On the basis of my experiences with the effects of cocaine, I have no hesitation in recommending the administration of cocaine for such withdrawal cures in subcutaneous injections of 0.03–0.05g per dose, without any fear of increasing the dose.

### **To Martha Barnays, from Paris, 18 January 1886**

He [Charcot] invited me (as well as Ricchetti) to come to his house tomorrow evening after dinner: “Il y aura du monde.” You can probably imagine my apprehension mixed with curiosity and satisfaction. White tie and white gloves, even a fresh shirt, a careful brushing of my last remaining hair, and so on. A little cocaine, to untie my tongue. It is quite all right of course for this news to be widely distributed in Hamburg and Vienna, even with exaggerations such as that he kissed me on the forehead (à la Liszt).

### **To Martha Barnays, from Paris, 20 January 1886**

On Saturday Charcot came up to Ricchetti and invited him to dine at his house on Tuesday before leaving. Startled, R. declined, and finally accepted to go after dinner. Then Charcot turned to me and repeated the latter form of invitation, which I accepted with a bow, feeling delighted.

...

We drove there in a carriage the expenses of which we shared. R. was terribly nervous, I quite calm with the help of a small dose of cocaine, although his success was assured and I had reasons to fear making a blunder.

...

These were my achievements (or rather the achievements of cocaine), which left me very satisfied.

### **To Martha Barnays, from Paris, 2 February 1886**

The bit of cocaine I have just taken is making me talkative, my little woman. I will go on writing and comment on your criticism of my wretched self.

...

Here I am, making silly confessions to you, my sweet darling, and really without any reason whatever unless it is the cocaine that makes me talk so much. But now I must go out to supper and then dress myself up and do some more writing. Tomorrow I will report to you quite truthfully on how the evening at Charcot's turned out. You of course must tell everyone that I had a wonderful time, and I shall write the same to Vienna. The truth is for us alone.

...

Thank God it's over and I can tell you at once how right I was. It was so boring I nearly burst; only the bit of cocaine prevented me from doing so.

...

Only toward the end I embarked on a political conversation with Giles de la Tourette, during which he of course predicted the most ferocious war with Germany. I promptly explained that I am a Jew, adhering neither to Germany nor Austria.

...

But please don't tell anyone how boring it was.

**From 'Beiträge über die Anwendung des Cocaïn,' *Weiner Medizinische Wochenschrift*, 28, pp. 929–932, July 1887**

*All reports of addiction to cocaine and deterioration resulting from it refer to morphine addicts, persons who, already in the grip of one demon are so weak in will power, so susceptible, that they would misuse, and indeed have misused, any stimulant held out to them. Cocaine has claimed no other, no victim on its own.* I have had broad experience with the regular use of cocaine over long periods of time by persons who were not morphine addicts, and have taken the drug myself for some months without perceiving or experiencing any condition similar to morphinism or any desire for continued use of cocaine. On the contrary, there occurred more frequently than I should have liked, an aversion to the drug, which was sufficient cause for curtailing its use.

**To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 24 November 1887**

Esteemed friend and colleague:

My letter of today admittedly is occasioned by business; but I must introduce it by confessing that I entertain hopes of continuing the relationship with you and that you have left a deep impression on me which could easily lead me to tell you outright in what category of men I place you.

## **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 28 December 1887**

Your cordial letter and your magnificent gift awakened the most pleasant memories for me, and the sentiment I discern behind both Christmas presents fills me with the expectation of a lively and mutually gratifying relationship between us in the future. I still do not know how I won you; the bit of speculative anatomy of the brain cannot have impressed your rigorous judgment for long. But I am very happy about it.

## **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 24 January 1895**

Dearest Wilhelm,

I must hurriedly write to you about something that greatly astonishes me; otherwise I would be truly ungrateful. In the last few days I have felt quite unbelievably well, as though everything had been erased – a feeling which in spite of better times I have not known for ten months. Last time I wrote you, after a good period which immediately succeeded the reaction, that a few viciously bad days had followed during which a cocainization of the left nostril had helped me to an amazing extent. I now continue my report. The next day I kept the nose under cocaine, which one should not really do; that is, I repeatedly painted it to prevent the renewed occurrence of swelling; during this time I discharged what in my experience is a copious amount of thick pus; and since then I have felt wonderful, as though there never had been anything wrong at all. Arrhythmia is still present, but rarely and not badly; the sensitivity to external pressure is slight, the sensations being between 0 and -0. I am postponing the full expression of my gratitude and the discussion of what share the operation had in this unprecedented improvement until we see what happens next.

## **“Case History” to Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 4 March 1895**

On the last day you were here, I suddenly discharged several scabs from the right side, the one not operated on. As early as the next day there appeared thick, old pus in large clots, at first on the right side only and soon thereafter also on the left. Since then the nose has again been flooded; only today has the purulent secretion become somewhat less dense. Light but regular symptoms: in the morning a stuffed nose, vile head, not better until large amounts have been discharged; in the interval occasionally migraine; everything by the way, not very severe. During the first of these days, I noticed with pride that I can climb stairs without dyspnea; for the last three days pain in the heart region, atactic pulse, and beautiful insufficiency.

...

Though not designed to make one feel at ease, this information affords some pleasure because it emphasizes once again that the condition of the heart depends upon the condition of the nose. I cannot regard the latter as a new infection; I have the impression that I really still have, as you

surmised, a focal pus accumulation (right sphenoid bone), which now happens to feel inclined to produce eruptions like a private Etna, as it were.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, date at head 13 March 1895**

It is a shame that both of us suffer from so much illness when we have so much ahead of us.

...

March 15.

Yesterday Mrs. K again sent for me because of cramplike pains in her chest; generally it has been because of headaches. In her case I have invented a strange therapy of my own: I search for sensitive areas, press on them and thus provoke fits of shaking which free her. Formerly, these areas were supraorbital and ethmoid; now they are (for the breast cramps) two areas on the left chest wall, wholly identical with mine. When I press on a point in her axillar, she says she feels it along the entire arm into her fingers. She does not have these pains spontaneously, as I do.

...

March 20.

My confession of how bad I am feeling also interfered with my mailing of the letter. Now I can report to you that since the day before yesterday I suddenly feel very good again – about the level I was on while you were here. The suppuration stopped a few days ago.

Poor Eckstein is doing less well. This was the second reason for my postponement. Ten days after the second operation, after a normal course, she suddenly had pain and swelling again, of unknown origin. The following day, a hemorrhage; she was quickly packed. At noon, when they lifted the packing to examine her, renewed hemorrhage, so that she almost died.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 20 April 1895**

With regard to my own ailment, I would like you to continue to be right – that the nose may have a large share in it and the heart a small one. Only a very strict judge will take it amiss that in view of the pulse and the insufficiency I frequently believe the opposite.

...

Today I can write because I have more hope; I pulled myself out of a miserable attack with a cocaine application. I cannot guarantee that I shall not come for a day or two for a cauterization or galvanization, but at the moment that too is not possible.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 26 April 1895**

Dear magician,



...

Something strange but not unpleasant has happened to me. I put a noticeable end to the last horrible attack with cocaine, since then things have been fine and a great amount of pus is coming out. Evidently I still have an empyema of the sphenoidal bone on the left, which naturally makes me very happy. She [Emma E.] too, my tormentor and yours, now appears to be doing well.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 27 April 1895**

Since the last cocainization three circumstances have continued to coincide: (1) I feel well; (2) I am discharging ample amounts of pus; (3) I am feeling very well.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 25 May 1895**

Now, to my ideas about the nose. I discharged exceedingly ample amounts of pus and all the while felt splendid; now the secretion has nearly dried up and I am still feeling very well. I propose the following to you: it is neither the congestion nor the flow of pus that determines the distant symptoms.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 12 June 1895**

Your kindheartedness is one of the reasons I love you.

...

I am feeling I to IIa. I need a lot of cocaine.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 16 August 1895**

We can share quarters, live and take walks together, insofar as our noses permit it.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 8 October 1895**

By this time news from you had become a necessity for me because I had already drawn the conclusion, in which I am rarely wrong, that your silence meant headaches. I began to feel more comfortable again when – after a long time – I once more held a piece of your scientific material in my hands. So far I have merely glanced at it and fear that respect for so much honest and subtle material will put my theoretical fantasies to shame.

I am putting together all sorts of things for you today – several debts, which remind me that I also owe you thanks, your case history of labor pains, and two notebooks of mine. Your notes reinforced my first impression that it would be desirable to make them into a full-fledged pamphlet on “The Nose and Female Sexuality.”

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 15 October 1895**

Crazy, isn't it, my correspondence! For two weeks I was in the throes of writing fever, believed that I had found the secret, now I know that I still haven't, and have again dropped the whole business.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 20 October 1895**

Everything fine except the three-day migraine. Aside from that regret, this letter is devoted to science.

I was of course terribly pleased with your opinion about the hysteria-obsessional neurosis solution. Now listen to this. During an industrious night last week, when I was suffering from that degree of pain which brings about the optimal condition for my mental activities, the barriers suddenly lifted, the veils dropped, and every thing became transparent – from the details of the neuroses to the determinants of consciousness. Everything seemed to fall into place, the cogs meshed, I had the impression that the thing now really was a machine that shortly would function on its own. The three systems of  $n$ ; the free and bound states of  $Qn$ ; the primary and secondary processes; the main tendency and the compromise tendency of the nervous system; the two biological rules of attention and defense; the characteristics of quality, reality, and thought; the state of the psychosexual group; the sexual determination of repression; finally, the factors determining consciousness, as a function of perception – all that was correct and still is today! Naturally, I can scarcely manage to contain my delight.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 31 October 1895**

Although I am dead tired, I feel obliged to write to you before the month is over. First, to your latest scientific reports which I also welcome as a measure of your headaches.

First impression: amazement that there exists someone who is an even greater fantasist than I am and that he should be none other than my friend Wilhelm. Conclusion: I intend to return the pages to you so they will not get lost. Meanwhile, I found the matter quite plausible and said to myself that only an expert in all fields like you could have come up with it. I was singularly impressed with the sharp glance over all the roofs. I guess I was born to be your *claque*.

### **To Wilhelm Fliess, from Vienna, 29 November 1895**

I feel really amazingly well, as I have not since the beginning of the whole business. Moreover, I no longer have any pus, just a lot of mucous secretion. I have, by the way, never doubted the success of your minor surgical interventions, and thus have earned my well-being.

## Freud in New England

*Part of a talk given by Alan Lawson, Boston College, in 2004*

The story of how Freudian psychology came to America is commonly told in terms of European emigré psychoanalysts residing in upper West Side Manhattan who analyze anxious Americans, dominate the practice of psychiatry, and apply Freudian concepts to social and literary issues.

But the title that commands me here is “Freud in New England,” not New York, and I intend to carry out my duty literally. Thus we must go back to the time before those New York emigrées arrived, a time when Sigmund Freud made his only trip to America. He did so in answer to an invitation in 1909 from G. Stanley Hall, the noted psychologist and president of Clark University, to join other prominent European and American scholars in giving a series of lectures to commemorate Clark’s 20th anniversary. Freud hesitated briefly, partly from a frugal reluctance to lose income from his practice in Vienna for several weeks, but at a deeper level because he shared the standard prejudice of the European intelligentsia that America was an outpost of crude materialism, religious oppression, and shallow thinking.

Freud was flattered by Hall’s invitation, but he liked to say that he really decided to accept because he had always wanted to see an American porcupine. Behind the joke Freud remembered that in the 1880s, when he was desperately poor and unappreciated, he had considered emigrating to America. Now, porcupine or not, he had the satisfaction of going as an honored and curious guest.

Freud’s trepidations persisted, nonetheless. As his liner entered New York harbor, his fellow invitees and disciples, Carl Jung and Sandor Ferenczi, exclaimed that they were bringing enlightenment to the New World. Freud replied glumly that they were really bringing the plague.<sup>†</sup>

The tour of the city that followed was an ordeal. Freud had a bout of indigestion in a restaurant and fainted. When he revived, he, Jung, and Ferenczi went for a walk in Palisades Park, where Freud accidentally peed his pants. Jung, in true overdeterminist Freudian style, seized on one of Freud’s own insights to claim that the indiscretion showed Freud was an ambitious man who wanted to call attention to himself. Freud protested that he just didn’t have time to get to one of those subterranean palatial marble men’s rooms Americans fancied.

Then, cleaned up, tired, and jangled, the three travelers boarded a train for the wilderness city of Worcester, where the local newspaper had hailed their coming with bumptious good humor. “Conference Brings Savants Together: Long-haired Type Hard to Discover” was the title of one feature story. Another, assuming a happy outcome, declared “Men with Bulging Brains have Time for Occasional Smiles.”

Everything was jovial at the Hall home, where Freud and his companions stayed. Jung wrote to his wife that the place was “furnished in an incredibly amusing fashion,” with boxes of cigars everywhere, pitch-black servants in dinner jackets, windows that reached the floor, doors open – including even the bathroom and front door – people running freely in and out, and, beyond, an

English lawn that was also open – vast and unfenced. As for their hosts, Jung wrote that Professor Hall “received us with the kindest hospitality. He has a plump, jolly... and extremely ugly wife” who “took over Freud and me as her ‘boys’ and plied us with delicious nourishment and noble wine, so that [soon] we began... to recover.”

The formal proceedings were equally upbeat. Freud’s lectures were well attended and occasioned no objections such as he had suffered in Europe, even when he ventured his theory of childhood sexuality in the fourth lecture. Much to Freud’s delight, the famous William James attended one of the lectures. Afterward they went for a walk and James, wrapping his arm around the shoulders of Freud’s American apostle, Ernest Jones, proclaimed that Freud’s insights represented the future of psychology.

The celebration climaxed in the awarding of honorary degrees. Jung remembered Freud receiving his with tears of long delayed gratification glistening in his eyes. Then it was off with the family of James Jackson Putnam, Boston’s leading psychotherapist, to the Adirondack camp Putnam had bought with William James. In that remote Arcadia, Freud cheerfully wrote his wife, the group balanced discussions of the Clark sessions with hiking and picnicking. He mentioned an “amazing” new board game Putnam’s 12 year old daughter played with him, and added that his guides even found a porcupine for him to inspect.

On the return trip Freud, Jung, and Ferenczi excitedly discussed forming an international association that would build on the encouraging Clark experience. Once he was home, Freud drafted Putnam to head the American Psychoanalytic Association.

<sup>†</sup> Lacan visited Jung in Kussnacht, near Zurich, in 1954. Jung told Lacan how Freud had declared that he and Jung were “bringing the plague” to America when they reached New York, an anecdote which Lacan often repeated subsequently.